

The Preparation for The Great Day

REVELATION 4

The Holy Spirit has begun His end-time work in our day, and will continue that work with greater and greater intensity according to the promises, through the period of The Great Tribulation. The *Great Outpouring of Acts 2:17-21*, the fulfillment of Pentecost, takes place near the outset of The Great Tribulation. For people who have fully accepted God's Way, it is the beginning of the new age of peace and righteousness, though to most it will not appear so. Other Scriptures speaking of the great revival include: *Isa. 58:6-14, 30:25-33; Hosea 5:15, 6:3, 2:14-23; Dan. 12:4; Joel 2:11-32; Acts 2:15-21; Jn. 14:12; Rom. 8:19; Jms. 5:7-8; Eph. 4:12-13*. God's protection for His own is shown in *Ps. 46, 91; Isa. 54; II Sam. 22; Heb. 2:14-18*.

In our Lord's Letters to the Churches of Christendom, we have seen the status of worship in the world. We also have read the admonitions, warnings and promises to the various categories of people, particularly as they apply to the end-time generation. John starts *Revelation 4* with being called to the heaven in which God's Throne is now situated (not Paradise), to be shown things there which will develop future to 96 A.D. He is shown the status of worship there during the ending of the age. Right away, he sees there is an open door to heaven for all who will come. The time of the scene is prior to the breaking of the first Seal, prior to the blowing of the first Trumpet, prior to the taking up of the Firstfruits group, and prior to the marriage of the Lamb.

:**3** Around God's Throne is the rainbow of covenanted mercy.

:**4** The 24 elders are rulers (*I Pet. 5:1-2; I Tim. 3:1,5*), mature but certainly not decrepit. They have power and authority (crowns and thrones), and their function is therefore governmental in heaven. They are individuals who speak (to John – *Rev. 5:5, 7:13*) and sing (*Rev. 5:9*). They are distinct from John, the four living creatures (*4:9-10*), the angels (*5:11, 7:11*), God's people (*5:8*), the redeemed (*5:9*), the Firstfruits (*14:1-5*) and the Harvest group – either those to be resurrected (*11:17-18*) or still living (*7:13-14*). The elders correspond in number and function to that earthly group of the rulers of the Sanhedrin (*Heb. 8:5*). The picture is the situation in heaven up to the time Jesus Christ takes up His sovereignty over the earth. These elders are God's senior executive officers. *Jeremiah 23:18,22* and *Psalms 89:7* also speak of the council of the Lord (not the counselors, *Rom. 11:34*). The office is a priestly one and they worship God as Creator (*4:11*), as eternal Sovereign (*11:17*) and as righteous Judge (*19:4*). They play harps and sing, they worship the Lamb and present the prayers of the saints. They also have the status of prophets (*5:9-10* and *7:14-17*).

:**5** Out of the Throne come lightning and thunder (judgments).

:**6** The sea like glass or crystal, also mentioned in *15:2*, is before the Throne of

God, smooth and with no tossing of waves of confusion following the winds of false doctrine.

:7-8 The description of the four living creatures is obviously symbolic and similar descriptions occur in *Ezekiel 1* and *10* and in *Isaiah 6:2*. These living creatures are worshippers and are a heavenly type of the Body of Christ on earth shown in Ezekiel's visions. The Lord is not leading His people out of the confusion of man-controlled religious, commercial and political systems which limit Him, only to let them grope in uncertainty (*Ps. 68:16*). He does not want His sheep to wander "through all the mountains and upon every high hill" (from one sect and denomination to another) and be "scattered upon the face of the earth" (*Ezek. 34:6, Jer. 50:6-8*). He speaks of His sheep who will be rescued from the false shepherds and no longer be a prey to those who would make merchandise of them. He also speaks of the true shepherds which He will set over His flock to feed it (*Jer. 23:1-4, Ezek. 34:7-12*). We are now living in that cloudy and dark day and the Lord is fulfilling His promise by inviting His faithful disciples to come out of the limitations of man's devising and come into the freedom of God's providing.

Our Lord has a perfect plan for His Church-Body in this hour, which is according to His Word. But Christians have not been willing to let Him teach them from His Word by His Spirit, so He has been able to reveal but little of what has been placed in His Word. Now, however, they must hear His voice and conform to what He has decreed, or they shall not be able to stand in the day now upon them. In this day everything built according to man's ways shall surely fall (*Heb. 12:26-29*). Consider carefully, therefore, the unfolding of His plan for His Church, because time is running out.

First of all, Christians are to let the Lord join them together in one Body, for only He can do the joining together and only He can set each one in the place and position of His choice (*Ps. 127:1*). No one must try to fill a place not chosen for him, for that will create havoc in the Body. While the Body is one, even as there is one Lord and one Faith, because of geographic considerations and because of the numbers involved, all of the Body cannot be in one location at one time. Neither could each member function as the Lord desires if all had to be in one location at the same moment. Therefore, His plan is to divide the members of the Body into individual cell units or local assemblies, each assembly to function as a complete unit in itself, having no official relationship with any other assembly. The only relationships between units will be the spiritual bond which ties them together and the fellowship which they can have with one another from time to time. Each assembly will be governed by its own leader and elders. The plan is shown in *Ezekiel 1* and also in the New Testament accounts of the Church.

Vision of Church Order

EZEKIEL 1

The Prophet Ezekiel was given a vision at the river Chebar in which he saw the Cherubim (four living creatures) lifted up from the earth (*Ezek. 1:19*), and now today the Lord is again lifting up before His people a vision of His desires. With this vision, He will give understanding and wisdom to know what to do and how to bring about the realization of the vision. Each of the living creatures is shown to have the faces of a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle (*Ezek. 1:10*) and so shall the Lord give His people courage to rule, fortitude in serving, wisdom in truth and new perception. Through applying these, will His people fulfill what is shown them.

The living creatures, symbolizing the dedicated, world-wide Body of Christians, moved at the behest of the Holy Spirit and only when the Spirit moved; otherwise they moved not (*Ezek. 1:12,20*). Shall not the Spirit of the Lord move mightily on His people to enable them in the work that He purposes to do, and shall He not cause them to go forth in His Name to gain a great victory for Him? Note also the way in which the living creatures made a sound with their wings – like that of a host which goes to battle (*Ezek. 1:24*), for the Lord will commission His people as a mighty host to do battle for Him in this day. Their voice shall be heard as the voice of the Almighty.

Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord and he saw Him sitting above the firmament upon a Throne (*Ezek. 1:26-28*). The Throne symbolizes rulership and the authority which Christ exercises in this Body. The Body is to receive its direction from the Head (*Eph. 1:22-23*). All of the Body is to be in absolute subjection to the Lord, or what He plans to do will not be accomplished. The firmament seen under the Throne and over the heads of the living creatures indicates the expanse of Christ's protecting love. In that expanse of firmament He will have His angels on duty to keep and protect from all harm. From the Throne shall all things be directed to carry out that which the Lord has purposed, and no one shall be able to stop Him as His people are sent forth. The firmament also is a type of the spiritual atmosphere which must pervade everything done in the Body. Without a spiritual "air" pervading all the functions of the Body, there can be no spiritual operation of the Body. This is why it is so important for Christians to seek the Lord's face constantly, to be instant in prayer at all times, to let their praises ascend continually to Him and to live daily in His Word. What He is revealing is a spiritual plan for a spiritual people and it cannot work among those who are not living on a high spiritual-plane. The plan is not for those who are still walking as men and living on the level of the carnal.

Under the firmament, Ezekiel saw four living creatures, which are a type of the world-wide Body of Christians as it functions at the direction of the Holy Spirit. Did not the living creatures continue to move forward until they were stopped by the Spirit

(*Ezek. 1:12*)? So shall the people of the Lord move where He sends them and they shall stop when He shows them, and they shall continue to come and go at His directive until all that He has determined is fulfilled. The plan of the Lord cannot be thwarted. He will be in the midst of His people and He shall be a wall of fire to protect them (*Zech. 2:4-7*), and they shall consume their enemies before them (*Dan. 2:44*). The fire which was between the living creatures shall go before them, and none shall be able to withstand the mighty workings of the Spirit in their midst (*Ezek. 1:13-20*).

Ezekiel observed the living creatures flying swiftly to fulfill the destiny which they are to portray, even a swift work which the Lord is now doing (*Ezek. 1:14*). He will cause His Spirit to move on those whom He has prepared, and will cause them to fulfill His purpose for this end-time. It will be a work swiftly accomplished, because all things have been made ready, and the Lord will make a quick end of it. He will do a quick work and will cut it short in His righteous indignation (*Rom. 9:28, Matt. 24:22*).

The Lord pictured to Ezekiel the way in which His people are to be brought together as the living creatures were united. When they moved, they all moved together (*Ezek. 1:9*). They acted as one. They did not move individually, but they moved together at the direction of His Spirit. In the same manner, the Lord will have an end-time Body (smaller than the Body of all Christians) which shall move at His direction as one man. They shall be perfectly joined together to form that Body and Temple, which shall be filled with His glory. Then these unified living creatures were shown being lifted up from the earth as they flew by the power of their wings (*Ezek. 1:19,21*). In a similar manner, will not the Lord lift up His people to Himself when their work is finished? Shall He not lift them out of this world and change them and bring them into the heavenly realm and the heavenly glory (*I Cor. 15:40,51-53*)? The Cherubim are heavenly creatures, and to Ezekiel they pictured the Body of Christ which is filled with His glory and has its destiny and inheritance in the heavenlies.

When shall all these things be? Ezekiel was given an answer in his next vision, after he went out on the plain away from the river Chebar. Ezekiel was to lie upon his side 430 days, bearing the iniquity of *God's people* (*Ezek. 4:5-6*). For us today, has it not been over 430 years since the Lord began to move in power by His Spirit to bring deliverance from the bondage of the Roman system? Are not "God's people" today the membership of Catholic and Protestant churches? Have not His true servants been bearing the iniquity of the people and speaking forth His Word since that time? Ezekiel was lying on his side partially bound so he could not go out of his house (*Ezek. 3:24-25*). Thus he acted out the partial deliverance of the people of God and the partial bondage which has kept them from fully entering into the liberty of the message and ministry reserved for this end-time. Ezekiel also set up siege works against the representation of the city of Jerusalem drawn upon a tile (*Ezek. 4:1-3*). In this end-time the Lord is now preparing to bring destruction upon the earth by allowing the enemies of Christendom to prepare siege works against all of Christendom. If you will count the years from the time of the Reformation begun by Martin Luther, when he came forth in power against the corruption in his day, and when those who were joined with him began to bear the iniquity of the people by receiving their reproach and wrath (1550-1555), you come to that time in which the Lord began to make ready His final work. The intervening period is in accordance with the number of days Ezekiel had lain on his side, for the Lord appointed a day for a year (*Ezek. 4:6*). It has been 390 years from the establishment of Protestantism by the 1555 Peace of Augsburg to the military use of the

first nuclear bomb which signaled the timing of the Lord's new work among the Christian nations of spiritual Israel. Then approximately another 40 years elapses until the new and strange work of the Lord among believing people was to begin.

During this period, Ezekiel ate his bread and drank his water by measure, while he was bearing the iniquity of the people (*Ezek. 4:9-11*). The picture illustrates more than one truth, but it does show, during this recent 430 year period, that the Lord had been dealing out the Bread of the Word and the Water of His Spirit by measure. Much of the time, there has been a great famine in the land, a great lack among His people of that which the Lord is ready and able to give. However, the day is come for the Lord's people to eat freely, for He has made ready a great feast of spiritual things for those who will hear His voice and come to His banquet table. In fullness will He give the Bread of His Word and the Water of His Spirit in these days, and His people shall be satisfied.

Ezekiel bared his arm as a sign to God's people, and the Lord is ready to bare His mighty arm of wrath to the inhabitants of the earth. But He will also bare His mighty arm of protection and vindication for those peculiarly His own (*Ezek. 4:7*). The Word of God shall certainly be fulfilled, and His mighty arm shall get Him victory over all His foes (*Isa. 59:15-18*). As Ezekiel did keep himself from all the ways of the people, in their rebellion and stub-bornness of heart, so those the Lord has chosen today must separate themselves to Him. And as did Ezekiel, they must be willing to stand on their feet and speak the Word of the Lord. Those He is preparing shall be sent into a rebellious people (*Ezek. 2:1-8*). But those He is preparing are not to seek to please man; rather, they are to seek to please the Lord. Those who are men-pleasers shall surely not enter into that ministry which the Lord has reserved for His Ezekiel company in these concluding days of the age. The fear of God rather than the fear of man shall be in their hearts, and they shall speak the Lord's Word with boldness.

Returning again to the picture of the four living creatures (*Ezek. 1:10*), each of the creatures had four faces. The face of the lion indicates the courage and boldness which the Lord will give to those who are functioning in His Body according to the Divine plan, and they shall have a kingly bearing of power and authority in whatever they do. They shall go out with boldness and confidence and none shall be able to withstand that which the Lord puts within them. The face of the ox shows not only the fortitude which will be in the Lord's people, but also that the Lord's people are to consider themselves as servants of one another, for it is written that the greatest shall be the servant of all (*Matt. 23:11*). Each one in the Body shall serve the others, each counting the other better than himself. And in humility and godly fear he shall seek not to exalt himself or take to himself any responsibility which does not belong to him. This perfect plan will not work unless each one is willing to be the servant of all.

Then the face of a man pictures the end-time Body of Christ coming toward the fullness of stature of the man Jesus Christ, growing up in all things to the Head of the Body, eventually even the fullness of Him that fills all in all (*Eph. 4:13-15; 1:23*). This end-time Body shall be as one man, functioning to complete all the Lord has planned for this age. As mankind was brought forth in the image and likeness of God at the close of the sixth day of the creative week, so will the Lord bring His corporate Body to the fullness of its earthly stature at the close of the sixth day of the redemptive week cycle. As mankind entered God's rest from His *creative* work prepared for that seventh day, so shall our Lord's people enter the rest from His *redemptive* work prepared for

them on the new seventh day now close at hand, the great 1000 year period of peace and righteousness soon commencing. But first these people must reach the standard of perfection set for them, and be brought into the image and the likeness of Jesus Christ. Even so, shall the Body come into wisdom and maturity, and be ready to show to the world that the Lord's plan cannot be thwarted.

And the living creatures also had the face of an eagle, for it is written that His people shall mount up with wings as an eagle (*Isa. 40:31*). An eagle is able to soar to heights where few creatures ever reach, even into the very heights of the heavens. So will the people in these last days, who function according to the plan, find themselves soaring into the heavenly places in Christ (*Eph. 2:6*). Those who will prepare themselves will be enabled by the Lord to mount up, and they shall have the visual resolution of an eagle to see things man has never seen before. They shall have the endurance of an eagle to stand up to anything coming against them and they will not be afraid of the approaching storm. They shall set their "wings" and soar into the heavens on the very winds which carry the power and force of the storm. They shall ascend to the heights in Christ where no storm can affect them, and they shall overcome all things.

Ezekiel saw that the living creatures each had four wings, indicating fruitfulness on earth in working out God's building plan – catching the spiritual air for lift and providing protection and mutual support (*Ezek. 1:6,11*). Two were outstretched to touch the wings of the others and two covered the body of each. It is also written that the Lord will stretch out His wings to cover and His wings shall protect (*Ps. 91:4*). And it is written that the woman was given the wings of an eagle to carry her into a place of safety (*Rev. 12:14*). So shall the Lord protect and overshadow to keep those who are especially His from all harm in the day when the storm clouds are heavy.

Ezekiel saw the hand of a man extending from under the wings on the living creatures (*Ezek. 1:8*). Here is pictured a type of the ministries which will be set in the midst of the world-wide Body of Christ to care for its needs and to guide it in the right path. There are five of these ministries, just as there are five fingers on the hand. First is that of the apostle (special messenger), a foundational ministry (*I Cor. 12:28*) primarily to reveal God's will, also to establish His people in God's Divine ways. The early Apostles were primary in the Body. It could not function in the Divine pattern until the Apostles made known God's will and revealed His truth to the people. Therefore, apostles will yet again be raised up in this day to declare God's will for His people and, where necessary, to set His house in Divine order and show His people what is required of them to keep them from going astray. Those who become apostles will go from place to place to establish what needs to be established, and set in order what needs to be.

Then there is the prophet (*I Cor. 12:28*), also a foundational ministry (*Eph. 2:20*) to reveal God's will and to make known His plan, usually in association with an apostle, but not always. The prophet is especially endowed with a ministry in prophecy, and the word shall flow from his lips as the very Word of God by direct inspiration of His Spirit. These prophets will be matured ministers, tried and tested, called and sent forth – not those who are only yet in their schooling and training. The prophet will teach the deep things of the Word, especially as they relate to the events of the hour and the fulfillment of God's purposes in the earth. He shall have deep insight into the needs of people, to discern what needs correcting or changing. He shall speak God's Word fearlessly, yet in love and compassion, as he seeks to minister to the needs of the Body of Christ.

Then there are the teachers (*I Cor. 12:28*), the first of which is the evangelist (*Eph. 4:11*). He is a teacher of the redemptive truths relating to the needs of the Body of Christians and its outreach to those who are unsaved. He shall preach the Word with power to exhort and admonish and encourage the people in their witness for Jesus. And he shall unfold to their understanding the ways and means of sharing the Faith with those around them. The evangelist will also have a ministry of deliverance, so that the word he preaches shall be confirmed and established in power. He, too, will have great compassion for the people of the Body, and also for the unsaved, that they might be brought into the fold.

Second in the classification of teachers is the pastor, who will be closest to the people's personal needs and spiritual problems. He has the true shepherd heart, desiring to wait upon the people and patiently lead them into green pastures and by still waters. His ministry in the Word will be primarily one of taking the general principles of truth and making them applicable to the daily experiences of the people, so that they might enter into the reality of spiritual blessing and power. He will be constantly on the lookout for the little lambs needing attention, binding up their wounds and caring for them in their time of need.

Third in the classification of teachers will be the teacher who is one "par excellence," able to take the Word to the people and make it real to them, breaking it down into its many parts and showing its application to all phases of life. He shall be a master at clarifying the many little understood passages of Scripture and making them live for the people. He shall have great concern for the growth and maturing of each member of the Body of Christians, that *each* member might function in his proper place and develop into his own ministry.

These several ministries are yet to become available to the world-wide Body of Christians. All of these ministers, except the pastors, will probably be itinerant. The pastor will function as the head of his assembly. The itinerant ministers are to have the responsibility of reinforcing the larger Body through their help to the local leader and his assistants (*Eph. 4:12*).

Ezekiel saw that each living creature moved straight without turning. In whatever direction they went, they went together and straight ahead without wavering or variation (*Ezek. 1:9,12*). This is what the Lord expects of those who would be in His end-time Church. They must go as the Spirit directs and they must not turn to the left or to the right. There must be no variableness or shadow cast by turning, even as in the pattern of the Lord Himself (*Jms. 1:17*). They shall set their faces, even as were the faces of the cherubim.

Ezekiel also saw fire in the midst of the living creatures (*Ezek. 1:13*) and so shall the Lord be in the midst of the Body, as a living and consuming fire to continually purge and cleanse, and as a refining fire to purify from all defilement. It is to enable His people to become prepared to offer Him an offering in righteousness (*Mal. 3:3*). So shall the fire of His Spirit burn in the midst and no sin will be allowed to continue unnoticed and unchecked, for a little leaven permeates the whole. Therefore, all the leaven of malice and wickedness must be purged out from the midst of God's people (*I Cor. 5:6-8*).

The legs of the living creatures were as burnished brass and they were *straight* as

pillars (*Ezek. 1:7*). It is the Lord Who is building His Church in this end-time. And He is placing in that Church those who are to be pillars, even those who have overcome all the defilements of the flesh, and they will be recognized as pillars. They will be the strong ones in the Lord, those who can be depended upon and on whom the weak ones can lean. And the feet of the living creatures were like those of a calf, for it is the calf which is created to become a servant of others by providing milk and nourishment. So shall the pillars in the Church provide sustenance and support to all who have need, and thereby they shall make the Body of Christians strong in the Lord. They shall not waver in times of testing, but they shall be steadfast and uphold all who are in need.

Beside each of the living creatures, Ezekiel saw what appeared to be a wheel within a wheel, and each wheel's rim was full of eyes (*Ezek. 1:15-18*). These wheels moved when the living creatures moved and stood when the living creatures stood, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels (*Ezek. 1:20-21*). Here also is pictured their oneness, but in a different phase of the same truth. The living creatures picture God's plan for the Body of Christ as a whole, but the wheels beside them represent the individual local assemblies or cells of the Body as they are gathered together in a particular geographical district. They are one with the whole Body and yet they are separate in location. Even so the Lord will cause this Body to find its expression and function in the individual local assembly or cell unit.

Each local assembly of saints shall begin as a wheel within a wheel. The inner wheel comes first and corresponds to the nucleus of a cell in the human body. That nucleus is the heart and substance around which the rest of the cell is formed. In the ideal pattern, each local assembly would begin with a nucleus which the Lord will first firmly establish and join together. The nucleus will begin in a specified meeting place, preferably a home because of its convenience and availability, to minister *to the Lord* in praise and worship. The Lord will join together those He wants in each nucleus so each person must be sensitive in determining where the Lord would have him. None shall seek his own will or desire apart from the Lord's arranging. A nucleus can begin with two or three families meeting in a home on the Lord's day. Those meeting together shall subject themselves together in love, none seeking to dominate or force his will on the others. Mutual fellowship in the Lord and study of the Word are to constitute the basis of each meeting.

If not immediately available, in due time the Lord will set up or send in one of His ministers to teach each nucleus what He would have it know. In time also, if and when needful, He will send one of His apostles to help with the building of the assembly in Truth and to help the pastor organize his elders or overseers of that group. Therefore, those in the nucleus shall be willing to receive whomever the Lord sends to them and let the Lord establish them according to His patterns. They shall not try to apply man's organizational expertise and council, but they shall wait on the Lord's counsel and leading from His Word. They will look to Him for the needs they cannot then manage. In the process of time, when the need becomes obvious, He will enable each nucleus that is firmly knit and joined together and firmly established in Truth to move into a more public meeting place which will be accessible to all whom the Lord would draw by His Spirit.

It is written that the early Church met in the Temple and broke bread from house to house (*Acts 2:46, 5:42*), and that Paul taught them publicly and in homes (*Acts 20:20*).

Today also, the Lord would have two types of meetings for His people. When they are ready, He will help them find a larger place, where all will feel free to enter and where sinners can come to know the Lord. And He will also have His people continue to meet in homes of one or more, depending on the size of the Body and the need, in order that they might frequently break bread (celebrate the Lord's Supper) and encourage the development of every member of the assembly (*I Cor. 12:25-27*). (See note on next page.)

After the nucleus, or inner wheel, has moved to quarters that are conducive to continued growth and which are more accessible to all, then the Lord will begin to add others to build a more matured assembly, with its several home groups. This completion corresponds to the other part of the wheel revolving around the inner wheel – one wheel, but with inner and outer components. But this plan will not work until the nucleus is firmly established and so joined together that nothing will be able to destroy it. Then, and then only, is it ready to become the functioning center of the larger assembly which the Lord shall build around it.

The eyes on the rim which stood above and encircled the wheel (:18) represent the local elders (the pastor's assistants). The Lord is capable of providing the leadership needed, and He has the judgment to raise up those within the local assembly who are to function as administrators. The time has come for Him to set His house in order according to His plan, and not according to the "best" opinions of man. The time has come for ministers in development to give up whatever little kingdoms they have built for themselves. The time is at hand for these ministers to let the Lord use them to minister as He chooses, because many of them are not meant to stay in one place indefinitely and usurp the function given the pastor. How long a minister shall serve in a particular cell unit is entirely up to the Lord, and not according to the minister's own desires or wishes.

The wheels (the local portions of the Body) and the bodies of the living creatures (the world-wide Body) function together as one unit, moving only at the behest of the Holy Spirit. This plan is for a people willing to be completely led by the Spirit. It will not operate unless each minister works where the Lord directs, and unless each member of the Body is willing to let the Lord arrange for the place He has chosen for him. The whole Body of Christians everywhere shall function as a larger unit, with the appropriate ministers flowing through and working with the Body, wherever the Spirit sees the need. All members are to function in mutual fellowship, participating in whatever place and assignment the Lord determines.

The saints shall be gathered to the Lord (*Ps. 50:5*). Even now the gathering is in process, for He will gather together in one Body in this end-time those who have truly covenanted together with Him to do His will, and to lay themselves completely on His Altar of sacrifice. Sacrifice of all not in His plan will be required in order that the Lord's plan may be effective. Those unwilling to make this sacrifice will find a place in His scheme of things, but they will not be a part of the end-time Body which will be filled with the fullness of His glory. He will take one here and one there and bring them to Zion, His true spiritual City, and He will cause them to dwell in Jerusalem (peace) and they shall build up walls and set in order those things which are lacking (*Jer. 3:14-15, Isa. 58:10-12*). They shall see His workings in their midst to erect an end-time Temple that will be glorious beyond all that has been before. He will cause them to rejoice, and great will be the joy and the singing in their midst. Truly a sacrifice in joy shall they

make to their God. He is gathering together those upon whom He will pour out His Spirit. He shall come to them even as the latter rain and there shall be showers of blessing as never before. They shall be a people upon whom the glory of their God is *seen*, and the joy and rejoicing in their midst will be something to behold.

NOTE: We should not overlook the pattern of Acts (*Acts 2:44-46*) in which those added to the church after the First Pentecost, joined themselves together into communities of believers with all things common. Complete sacrifice as per *Luke 18:22*, “...*sell all that thou hast....*” and the pattern of Jesus and His disciples is the more perfect completion of the formation of Christ’s “Body” on earth. (For those with a desire to see the Ezekiel pattern fulfilled on a larger scale during the millennium, request and read Mikkel Dahl’s book, *THE COMING NEW SOCIETY*, available from Shepherdsfield Publishers.)

It is recognized that many who accept Christ may not be willing to accept or acknowledge such a commitment until during or after the Tribulation. But the moving of the Holy Spirit on the believers at the First Pentecost shall see a greater fulfillment after the Second Pentecost. They will hear the call to “...*Come out of her (Babylon), My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins. . .*” (*Rev. 18:4*).

This is not something that is for those who will not let the Lord teach them and correct them and instruct them in His ways. He will have a people who will let Him purge them completely from all that hinders and defiles, so that He can bring them forth in these last days a purified people, ready to do whatever He will commission them to do. They shall become the Glorious Church, with all spots and blemishes removed and all wrinkles taken away. These shall become as a mighty army to conquer and to gain a great victory for the Lord. Surely He will find a people upon whom He can shower His Spirit and the fullness of His power in these last days. Therefore, those who would thus gather together must abandon the former associations, for how can the Lord draw anyone completely to Himself when loyalties are divided? There must be the willingness to be gathered together with those who have been given the same vision and the same understanding. Two cannot walk together unless they are agreed. If there is to be a walk in the fullness of God’s glory and perfection for this last day, then there must be a withdrawal from those who would hold back.

The glory of the Lord shall return to His people only when a body has been prepared to receive it. At the beginning of this age, a physical body was prepared to receive that glory in the person of the Lord of Glory (*Heb. 10:5*), the very Son of the Father, and those who saw Him work beheld the glory of their God (*Jn. 1:14*). In the same pattern in this day, the Lord is preparing a *spiritual* Body to receive the glory which He will again bring to His people (*Eph. 1:22-23*).

The glory of the Lord manifested through the living creatures of Ezekiel’s vision (*Ezek. 1:4,5,13,27,28*), and these living creatures picture for us the reality and perfection of that end-time Body which our Lord Jesus Christ shall raise up to Himself. However, Ezekiel also saw that glory depart from the Sanctuary when later the glory cloud moved with the living creatures as they were lifted up from the Sanctuary polluted by the ways and traditions of man (*Ezek. 8:6, 10:16-22, 11:22-23*). By this picture we are to know that the glory of the Lord cannot be associated with *anything* not conformed to His Divine plan. He was driven from His Sanctuary by the abominations committed in Ezekiel’s time. He has also been driven from the churches of this day so that the full-

ness of His glory is not seen among them, not a single one, because His Sanctuary has been polluted by man's traditions and man-made ways. A kingdom divided against itself falls. Therefore, He can associate Himself with righteousness only; His plan is that righteousness. As righteousness is compromised, He has to progressively withdraw, there being less righteousness with which He can associate. Therefore, there is a minimum righteousness content below which His withdrawal is complete.

Assuredly, the glory of the Lord will not return until He finds a body of people ready to be joined together according to His ways. But then He will cause that Body to become a *Glorious* Temple for His presence and that Temple shall be filled with His glory. Ezekiel was given a vision of the new Temple which the Lord will build, a vision containing many truths not to be made known at this time, because it concerns that which will transpire in future ages. But the vision shows a Temple ordered and measured according to the Lord's directive, a Temple representative of the end-time Body which He shall raise up to Himself and fill with His glory. And Ezekiel saw the glory of God return to this new Temple in the same manner as he had seen it depart from the old polluted one (*Ezek. 43:2-5, 44:4*).

These are prophetic visions of what the Lord will do. His glory has departed from the polluted church systems of this day, but that glory will return to His end-time Temple when it has made itself ready.

How then shall the Body operate as it gathers together for worship and fellowship? First, our Lord Jesus Christ would have His people recognize what He has done and what He is doing for their benefit. He would have them thank Him and praise Him with their whole hearts, forgetting every selfish thing that would occupy their minds and their attention, and seek to make Him the center of their worship and devotion. He is a God jealous for their welfare, and He wants His people to be *undivided* in their thoughts as they come to worship Him (*I Cor. 1:10, Gal. 1:8-9*). He wants them to draw close to Him as they praise Him from their hearts, and as they sing with melody rising from their hearts to Him. And He wants them to understand that true praise grows from the doing of His will. It is written that if His people will draw nigh to Him, He will draw nigh to them (*Jms. 4:8*). But will He draw nigh if they do not draw nigh to Him? Can the Body function and minister as He chooses, when He is not the Head in its midst to lead and control all things and to bless by His presence? His people must come to a worship and praise of Him from the depths of their hearts, entering into the courts of His Temple, drawing close to Him – then He will exercise Himself to lead and bless in the midst of those who gather together in His Name.

The Lord is not detailing a schedule, or order of events, or a certain pattern, because there is a variety of ways in which meetings can appropriately be led. The teaching here presents the several elements which will be a part of the ministry in the Body of Christians as it gathers in His Name. The leading is not to issue out of mysticism. We are to recognize the direction from the patterns in the Word and we are then to decide on the order. But, also, we are to understand that here we are describing an order which is yet to be developed in the Glorious Church, following Pentecost. (See note on previous page.) Yet there ought to be a beginning now in the initial preparatory phases.

The Lord would have His people pray and make known to Him the petitions of their hearts. Having drawn close to Him in true praise and worship, His Spirit will be drawing close and moving on the hearts of His people to offer Him prayers that are born of

the anointing of His Spirit. Note, however, that the Spirit moves only in the *ways* of the Lord. Those are shown in His Word, and differ from the ways of man. Familiarity with the patterns in the Word develops maturity in judgment – growth and “fatness” (anointing) in him who works for that familiarity. On such a one, the Spirit finds it possible to move, bringing to his attention already familiar truths so they can be spoken and applied, perhaps in new combinations. Of course, this anointing can be upon just “ordinary” teaching or conversation. Through the anointing, those He moves upon are able to open their mouths and intercede on behalf of the Body, and cause the whole Body to be lifted to the Throne of grace and receive the guidance that is needed for the meeting. Also His people shall pour out their hearts to Him for those needs and burdens which He will quicken to their understanding. By His people yielding themselves to be instruments of heartfelt, Spirit-aligned prayer (from knowing His ways), He is enabled to move by His Spirit to bring into their midst the help and strengthening that is needed. So shall His people be lifted and strengthened and blessed as their prayers ascend to Him as sweet incense.

Then He would have His people yield themselves to Him in the use of the gifts of His Spirit to edify and strengthen the Body (***1 Cor. 12:6-12***). Since His glory departed, they have been a rarity, but are to return with the Second Pentecost. These gifts are for the upbuilding of the saints and for the fitting of the Body for the service He has already planned. Therefore, the Lord would have His people *get ready* to yield and function in whatever way His Spirit should assign, to minister the blessings of His grace through supernatural utterance, or supernatural operation, or supernatural deliverance, using the gifts of His grace. Each one should prepare himself to declare and make known that which the Spirit quickens to his understanding in wisdom, knowledge and discernment. He should work to be ready to yield to the promptings of the Spirit when moved upon to take hold of the workings of faith and healing and miracles, and minister these to whomsoever the Spirit should show. As the Lord perceives the readiness to act and speak out whatever He would have the people know, so will He move by His Spirit to bless and deliver. Surely He will again make the gifts of His grace available so that those prepared may minister and help one another. Therefore, He expects you too to make yourself available to His Spirit, in order that He might prepare you for His use as an instrument in the meeting to minister the riches of His grace to other members of the Body. Too long; we have been taught that that which is really soul is “Spirit.” Too long, we have willingly refrained from thoroughly searching out the difference. The contemporary danger in this area of “the gifts” is sensual or soul prompting not backed by God. The Body operation just described is not what your assembly is capable of doing today –not in its entirety.

The Lord would have you search His Word and let Him speak through those whom He has set to be teachers among you, so His Word will nourish and sustain and make you a fit vessel for His use. Spend *much time* seeking the Lord in His Word, and let it dwell richly in your hearts so you can share what He has shown you. All may participate in the ministry of the Word, as prompted by the Holy Spirit – the Spirit, not the soul. If you will respond to His plan, He will have those who are prepared and ready minister that which will be helpful in every meeting. Therefore, be subject to His chosen leader and seek the mind of the Spirit, letting Him bring forth the ministry of the Word which is ordered for your edification each time you gather together.

When you gather together, the Lord would also have you remember to give of your

material substance for the support of those ministers He has called to work with you and deliver His message for this hour. As you give so will He bless you (*Mal. 3:8-10*). Your investment of *His* resources in His business is for building your reward. He would also have you share with those who are in need, and give to certain causes which are doing a worthy work in Truth to the praise of His glory.

The Lord would also have you minister to Him by breaking bread (participating in the communion). He would have His people *regularly* remember Him in the keeping of the Lord's Supper. This is not "Law" at every meeting, but there is always advantage in it, particularly on Sabbaths, the evening of the new moon and sacred festival days (*Ezek. 46:1*). This remembrance of Him will always be a time of special dedication and heart-searching, for the Lord would have you consider seriously the meaning of this observance. Much benefit to the whole Body can be gained if this celebration is entered into with understanding, discernment and yielding to Him. There is much gain from making it a dramatization of truth, a dramatization of the fact that you truly eat the bread of the Word and truly drink in the spirit of the Covenant. But much judgment can come to a Christian who chooses not to fully enter into the reality of the sacrifice which the emblems represent and fails to anticipate the cleansing, healing and building they depict. It should be a special time of heart searching, confession and petition.

In this end-time, there is a spiritual plan for a people who are willing to be completely led by the Spirit. What the Lord has revealed, He will fulfill and accomplish, if we will only make ourselves available and if we will conform our daily life to everything He shows us. Lack of progress is disobedience. Discipline is in store for him who does the work of the Lord negligently, as well as for him who refuses to do it (*Jer. 48:10-12*). His assignment is "grow up," ask, seek, enter (*Isa. 28:24, Matt. 7:26, Ps. 119:2*). It is robbing God to take some element of His righteous principles and apply it to gain selfish goals. But, having begun to see the light by revelation of the Spirit, let us be very careful not to try to fulfill what we have seen by the wisdom and energies of the flesh (*Gal. 3:2-3*). What the Lord has been willing to put up with, or even use in measure in the past, is different from what He expects today. God is a perfectionist and He will not settle for less than His perfect order for His Church; To whom much is given, more is required. When more maturing by the Word has been attained, there is the certain expectation that you "act your age." It is a matter of record that this Church Age cannot end until all which is revealed for it in His Word is fulfilled (*Acts 3:20-21*).

The times of our ignorance God has overlooked, but now He tells us to repent and change our ways in the light of His revealings. To say we were walking in God's revealed light last year does not mean we are walking in His full revealed light today. Each must continue to walk in the additional light the Lord gives in understanding and how to put into practice, or the nonconformance brings risk of His withdrawal. If we feel we have already arrived at the ultimate of what God wants, then we will surely miss His perfect will for His people in the closing years of this Church Age. What we have known in the past is not sufficient for now, and what we know now will not be sufficient for tomorrow. There are no plateaus and no parking lots in His plan, only continuing progress toward His full stature. Many wish to just maintain "status quo" – but that is a hindrance. Only as we carefully endeavor to walk in the full light of that which He is revealing from day to day, can we have full fellowship with one another and continue to progress in His plan for this end-time (*I Cor. 8:2*).

Of one thing we can be sure. God is not interested in trying to remake or recapture the old. Today, His is a new work and a rapid work never before accomplished. So be careful, for you have not walked this way before! The church systems of the past have served their purpose and will still serve a certain purpose for a while longer. But they are old garments upon which God is not going to put a new patch. Their differing "faiths" are the old wineskins into which He is not going to pour His new wine (**Lk. 5:34-39**). The Lord wants His Church established according to His Divine plan and order. He wants a people who are willing to come out of all the hindrances of the traditional church systems, escaping from their limitations on God's plan. He wants a people who will begin to walk in the new light He is giving for His people in this hour. And He wants a people who will seek out and continue to make progress in new lessons yet to be given.

Study these prophecies again. You will see a revealing of the Lord's plan when His Church begins to function in Divine order. But we must remember that we are now in a period of transition and very few, if any, assemblies are yet functioning in God's Divine order. Therefore, we must be patient and let the Lord develop and set His house in order through the revealing of His plan. We must not try to do or to build something of our own outside of His plan. Great havoc has been wrought by man-appointed elders as well as man-appointed ministers. There should be no attempt to ordain ministers or elders in any specific place until the work of the Holy Spirit in them is clearly evidenced.

Any outside minister who is used by the Lord to *help* establish an assembly, carries his official and spiritual authority *with* the pastor of that group. When no longer needed, the minister then relinquishes his administrative authority over the work to the pastor and his elders. The outside minister will continue to develop into greater spiritual authority because of the ministry which the Lord has given him; but during visits, his official authority will be limited to that of an elder among elders. Where can you find a plan more perfect than this? Each assembly is to be under the responsibility of its own capable head, having the help of prepared elders, all working together to feed and guide the flock. And as additional resources, there are the four outside ministries ready to come at the Spirit's direction to do whatever the assembly cannot yet do.

The Lord will restore all that Satan, the devourer, has taken away (**Hag. 1:4-11; Joel 1:6, 2:12-13, 18-19, 23-29**). Only as there is a restoration of all that is lost can there then be a fulfillment of all that God has purposed. The Lord will restore, and through that restoring will His people once again eat the good of the land and enjoy the fruit of all He has given them. He will restore His true shepherds, and cause the false shepherds to cease operating and remove them from being shepherds over His people. He will raise up shepherds who will feed the flocks and lead His sheep onto the good land He has prepared for them. These shepherds are the true ministers, called and ordained by the Lord, who shall be restored to His people.

REVELATION 4 (CONTINUED)

Now let us return to the text of **Revelation 4**. The elders are the ruling overseers, having crowns (**Rev. 4:10**) and they are closest to the Throne (**Rev. 5:6**). They oversee the Body function there and they join in with the worship and adoration

initiated by the Body. The four living creatures in the Ezekiel passage each have four wings with five fingers under the wings. They show the Body's function or manner of working in its development on earth, during the testing and proving of the lessons learned. The four living creatures before the Throne in the heavenlies each have six wings, with "eyes" to oversee placed within the assemblies (extensions of the Body). These show the Body's function in heaven, where is also shown the attained accomplishments or fruitfulness from the lessons and testings and provings *on earth*. This results in a grateful and rejoicing heart. The *six* wings and their eyes, incorporating the number of humanity in its positive and constructive sense, show the securing of full mastery of all the lower propensities. This mastery embodies an independence from that which was struggled against, an independence brought about by dominion achieved.

But their worship is still that of doing the will of the Father and completing it, step by step. They may well be perpetually speaking forth their joy and praise to "their" Redeemer, yet the far more important aspect of their worship is in the honorable conduct of their service. True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. There are two aspects of the worship "in spirit." One is obviously that of worship within the spirit of the frame of the Father's plan and design. Within this frame the Holy Spirit operates, and the regenerated human's spirit is also being trained to operate. The other aspect is the conscious and joyful choice of His will by the human spirit, just because it is His will – excluding all alternatives. The worship in spirit is a worship which results from an exercise of personal will and persistent determination. True worship is also to be in truth, but truth is not to be confused with sincerity or right attitude. Worship which is worship in truth can only be that which evidences itself in those righteous deeds which fit into the Father's plan and design. Yahweh-Jesus is known as the Truth. We are called upon to love the Truth with our whole being and with all of our strength. The Faith He presented in the Old and New Testaments is the Truth, but it only becomes practical Truth when it is understood and accepted and implemented. Jesus said those who love Him are those who obey His commandments. The faith is truly *the* Faith only when it is employed in daily life, for faith without works is a dead faith and not *His* Faith. If the saved ones love and praise Him, that love and praise must first be evidenced by loving service. Heaven is pictured here as an arena of incessant activity in doing the Father's will. In that, He is worshipped in spirit and in truth. "Your will, Father, be done on earth as it is in heaven."

In the celestial environment, there is yet to be a new phase of the Father's ongoing plan in operation, and the worship pattern reveals, even there, the continuing need to seek out and make progress in the new lessons offered. Woe to those who are at ease (*Amos 6:1*), for God does not change (*Mal. 3:6*). Those in that realm are to be given advanced lessons on the subject of taking dominion; exercising dominion over all externals, through learning to transform even the basic elements of the earth planet into life-like material substance responsive to the author's thought and desire. It is to be in the same pattern as the dominion which will have already been attained over all that is internal within the being of man. But even in this new phase, there is the ruling oversight of the 24 elders. They have thrones and crowns, and are there to administer, counsel and give guidance.

Here in the present, the heavenly Body is shown with the face of the Lion. We are told that the positions of the stars in the heavens are there to be used as signs (*Gen. 1:14*). The face of the Lion is connected with the constellation of Leo and illustrates

God's rule through His designated authorities within the Body. The face of the Man (in contrast to the animal types) is connected with the constellation Aquarius. It illustrates the application of the living water, which is wisdom and truth, and is for the purpose of being applied for moving forward into greater achievement in the pattern of Jesus Christ. The Bull-calf's face connects with the constellation Taurus, and illustrates the serving of others through possessions and through the word of counsel and encouragement, strengthening and helping those in the Body of Christians – even in the face of any impediment. The Eagle face, in mythology connected with the constellation Scorpio, illustrates freedom in a new dimension through the creativity of the spoken word. From that derives new perspectives, new generation and new accomplishments in the Body of Christians. And the Sea is the reservoir of Divine guidance – the “brain.” And in the midst is the regulating Fire of the Holy Spirit. All of this is shown in the “4” of the testing and proving of lessons truly learned and in fruitfulness of accomplishment which comes as a result and as confirmation of true worship in spirit and in truth.

We have seen that the fully matured Body of Christians is to be joined to Him as co-heir to inherit positions superior to many of the angels (*Heb. 2:6-8, I Cor. 6:1-3*). The earthly Body of Christians, now being prepared, is described in almost the same imagery as these beings in heaven. These in heaven are the heavenly counterpart of the Body of Christians yet to be brought to the Throne, for as it is in heaven, so it is also to be on earth.

Preparation for Opening the Seven Seals

REVELATION 5

This portion of prophecy tells about preparation for the opening of the 7 Seals. The scene is in heaven, the time is before the Seals are opened, and as yet there are no overcomers seen in heaven (*Jn. 3:13, Acts 2:34, Rom. 2:11*).

: 1-4 The sealed scroll is lying in the right hand of the One on the Throne and it is the right hand which is the active and predominant hand. What is in the rolled up scroll and what can be observed by the progressive loosing of the Seals one by one? Scripture speaks of other scrolls as symbols of something the Lord is going to do, if the conditions of the moment persist. In *Ezekiel 2:9-10* there is a scroll with writing on the front and back, words of mourning, lamentation and woe; *Zechariah 5:2-4* speaks of a scroll containing a curse that goes out over the whole land; and *Jeremiah 32* and *33* tell of a scroll and prophecy which recite a record of unfaithfulness, corrective discipline, inheritance and re-establishment.

: 5 Under the seven Seals are preparations and remedial judgments, therefore only Jesus Christ is worthy to open the Seals, accomplish the preparations and carry out the judgments (*Jn. 5:22-23*). It was because He had conquered, He was given all authority in heaven and on earth (*Matt. 28:18*).

: 6-7 Other Scripture records that Jesus Christ has been at the right hand of God, next to His Throne, and in that placement He is seen here (*Col. 3:1, Heb. 12:2*). He is also seen among the elders who are priests, for He was also appointed Priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek (*Heb. 5:5-6*). It was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah Who prevailed to open the seven Seals, but it was a Lamb Who took the scroll from His Shepherd Who sat on the Throne, and then opened the Seals (*Rev. 6:1*). The dual ministry of Jesus is to be that of King and of Priest (*Heb. 7:1-2*).

As Priest, He is the Lamb of God Who gave Himself into His Father's plan as the perfect Sacrifice on the Cross and Who lives to make intercession for the redeemed (*Heb. 7:24-27*). As King, He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah Who will reign over the Throne of David – He will have no throne of His own *on earth* (*Isa. 9:6-7, Lk. 1:31-33, Rev. 22:1,3*). During the present dispensation of redemption, His Lamb ministry predominates. That is why He is seen here as a Lamb. As the end of the age draws to a close and the Seals of Judgment are opened to bring an end to the misrule of man, it is His Lion ministry that begins to prevail, because Jesus as King begins to take over that which is rightfully His. He begins to exert the power and authority given Him after His resurrection (*Matt. 28:18*), in such a way as to completely eliminate the usurpation of Satan-controlled man. He begins to exercise His own right as King. It is during the end-time period of the Seals and the Trumpets that forces of judgment are set in motion to effect an utter collapse of Satan-controlled, man-developed civilization, finally fulfill-

ing *Revelation 11:15*, “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Anointed, and He shall reign for the ages.” But first, His Lamb ministry of redemption must be completed for the present age, even though His Lion ministry of Kingship begins to come to the fore. The Lion nature of Jesus’ ruling authority must be made manifest. This authority begins to prevail as the Seals are opened, but it does not completely dominate until all rival rule and authority has been put down.

Here also is the pattern for each overcomer. First the pattern of the Lamb must be fulfilled by learning submission, humbleness, sacrifice and willingness to hear and follow the Voice of the Shepherd (*Jn. 10:27*), or the Lion ministry of joint-rule with Christ will never be entered. The willingness stage is where, by far, the most of serious Christendom is now, even those who are Spirit-filled. We all need more preparation, more seriousness in it, more dedication toward it. But he who is fully yielded and prepared as a “lamb” shall come forth in an end-time ministry of power, boldness and authority which is symbolized by the Lion.

The initial exercise of the prerogatives of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah brings not only progressive judgment on man’s civilization, it also begins to bring out a people who will enter into the spiritual realms of ruling with Christ such as *no* people have ever experienced before. This emergence shall cause a spiritual “shaking” and spiritual revolution unprecedented in human history. Great shall be the glory, power and dominion shown by the people who first come into the fullness of the Lamb nature of complete submission, and then move into the Lion ministry of the Lord’s end-time Glorious Church. When the Lion first roars or calls, He will be answered by the seven Thunders. The seven Thunders which “shake” the World are from the Firstfruits Bride company which accepts His call to come up (*Rev. 10:3-4*). They are her response in an attunement to the vibration frequency of the call of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Subsequently, she will speak the Word of God in a ministry of power and authority, entering into the Lion ministry of the seven Thunders (*Rev. 10:10-11, Jer. 1:10*).

Yet the Lion and the Lamb must “lie down” together in every member of the Body (*Isa. 11:6*). Unto the Lord Himself, they shall ever be submissive and obedient, hearing only His voice – Lamb-like. But to the world they will exhibit Kingly authority, ruling power, regal bearing and a Word ministry of spiritual vitality and dynamic deliverance – Lion-like. However, this shall come forth only in a people thoroughly prepared by the Lord and who have learned to live and walk in the Spirit, giving themselves totally to the call of the Spirit upon their lives, believing *into* His Name (*Jn. 14:12*).

The Lamb is pictured with seven horns (complete authority and rule over all things in heaven and earth) and with seven eyes (all seeing and with complete understanding). These seven are the seven Archangels under His rule who have authority and oversee all the affairs of the earth (*II Chron. 16:9, Zech. 4:10*).

:8-14 The taking of the scroll by Jesus and the preparation to open the Seals for setting the forces of judgment in motion, begins a new cycle. Then a new song is sung which is a pattern for the song of praise and thanksgiving now to be sung by those who make themselves overcomers.

At this time of setting events into motion for the winding up of the work “week” activities, there is rejoicing and congratulating going on in the heavens. The 24 elders are shown as administrators over the earth. They are vastly older spirit-beings than we,

having been begotten eons previous to our own, and they function as counselors to the lower angelic orders which have been assigned to monitor and help individual humans on earth, also families, towns and cities. They have never lived on earth, but they have been given jurisdiction over what goes on here. Yet a proper translation of the text seems to indicate that these elders have been redeemed from out of every tribe and language and people and nation and have been made kings and priests to reign on the earth. (With your blood, You purchased *us* for God . . . And You have made *us* kings and priests.) There are but 24 of the elders and yet they are said to be redeemed from out of hundreds of different places and peoples. So here we have the proof that they were not speaking of themselves individually, but had to be speaking of their redeemed wards on earth, with whom they identify themselves. It is in the same pattern as our Lord used: "*Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto Me*" (*Matt. 25:40-45*).

Confirmation is also seen in *Revelation 14:1-4*. There the 144,000 are shown with the Lord on Mt. Zion as a redeemed *Firstfruits* to God and to the Lamb. Being the first, fully redeemed, there could be none other before them from the human race. Yet the 24 are there and are named *elders*. Although countless millions of humans back through the centuries may have accepted Christ and left the world behind long before the Firstfruits are seen standing on Mt. Zion with God, yet we know that the ways of God are orderly (*Heb. 11:38-40*). With fully redeemed souls *and* physical bodies, the 144,000 sing a new song before the Throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders.